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LETTER

TO THE

Reverend D^r WELLS,

Rector of *Cotesbach* in *Leicestershire*.

In ANSWER to his

12. L^p 3

REMARKS, &c.

By SAMUEL CLARKE, D. D.
Rector of *St James's Westminster*, and
Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *James Knapton*, at the *Crown*
in *St Paul's Church-Yard*. 1714.

Price One Shilling.

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A
LETTER
TO THE
Reverend Dr *WELLS*, &c.

S I R,

MY Book, entitled *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*, had been published above a Year and half, and nothing came out * against it but Pamphlets set forth by such *Unintelligible* Writers, as I thought might well be left to the *common Sense* even of the meanest Readers to judge of, without my interposing any further. The Name and Character which Dr *Wells* had acquired in the World, by his Writings in some other Controversies, and by his Books relating to other parts of Learning; raised in me an Expectation of something more considerable from *Him*, and something

* For, as to the Books published not against my *Argument*, but against *Me*; I refer to my Introduction, pag. 24 and 25.

which might well deserve more particular Notice. Upon which Account, though your Remarks, when they came out, did not answer the Opinion I had conceived of your Abilities, yet I thought fit to send you the following *Observations* upon them.

pag. 1.

You begin with this Question : *Upon reading these Words of the Doctor, [viz. that he " had collected ALL the Texts that relate to the Doctrine of the Trinity " ;] might not one have Reasonably expected, that the D^r had collected the Texts of the OLD as well as New Testament, relating to the said Doctrine ? For is not the OLD Testament a Part of Scripture, as well as the New ?*

pag. 2.

Again ; The D^r ought at least to have given some satisfactory Reason, why he took not the like Notice of the Texts of the Old

pag. 3.

Testament as of the New. Again ; It remains incumbent upon him, to give the Publick a satisfactory Reason, why he did not collect All the Texts of the Old Testament, as well as of the New, that relate to the Trinity. Now I did imagine, Sir, when I published my Book, you might easily have guessed what my Reason was, why I alleged no Texts out of the Old Testament. But, since I perceive you cannot discover it, I will for once endeavour to explain it to you. My Reason was, because, though there are indeed in the Old Testament innumerable

numerable Texts, which contain Prophecies concerning the *Person and Character*, the *Office, Power and Dominion* of *Christ the Messiah*; yet *there is No Text* in the *Old Testament*, wherein the *Doctrine of the Trinity* is revealed. *You yourself* have alleged none: Nor have I seen any alleged by *Others*, from whence any Argument can be drawn at all conclusive. If you think the Word, אלהים, implies a Plurality of Persons; the contrary is evident from many Passages, wherein you must of necessity allow it can signify but One. Thus, *Psal. 45; 6, 7, Thy Throne, O God, [אלהים] is for ever and ever;—Thou hast loved Righteousness; Therefore GOD, [אלהים] even THY GOD, hath anointed thee, &c.* Certainly, neither in *Solomon*, to whom the Jews applied the Word [אלהים] in the first Part of this Passage; neither in the *Son of God*, to whom the Apostle applies it; neither in *God the Father*, to whom it is applied in the second Part; can there be said to be a Plurality of Persons. And as to those Passages, wherein *Christ* is represented as appearing to the Patriarchs, ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, in the *Form of God*, in the *Name and Authority*, and with the *Power and Glory of his Father*; being stiled, at the same time, both *God and the Angel of GOD*; I have already considered and explained them in my
Scripture-

Scripture-Doctrine, pag. 102, 105, 114, and 369.

pag. 3.

However ; because you could not (it seems) guess at *This Reason* of my not citing a number of Texts out of the Old Testament, you kindly suggest for me *Another Reason* ; viz. that I *understood not the Original Revelation, or Hebrew and Chaldee Languages wherein the Old Testament was Originally written.* Suppose now, Sir, I should insinuate to my Readers, because *You* have offered no Objections against my Exposition of the several Texts in the *New Testament*, that therefore *You understand not the Original Revelation, or the Greek Language wherein the New Testament was Originally written* ; Would you Think, that, in such an Insinuation, I acted the part of a reasonable Man and a Scholar ? And is it not in *Yourself* a Sign of great Want of Arguments relating to the Merits of the Cause, when you are forced to descend to so mean a Suggestion, (concerning One who has not the Honour to be personally known to you,) as that I undertook to collect *All* the Texts concerning a particular Subject out of the *Whole* Scripture, without so much as understanding the Languages wherein more than *One Half* of the Scripture was written ? What degree of knowledge I have in those Languages, it would

would no more *become Me* to boast in this place; than it *became You* to suggest, (without knowing any thing of the Matter,) that I had No knowledge in them. Had you alleged any *particular Texts*, as contradicting (in the True Rendring of the *Hebrew*) any thing that I had asserted; you might have expected I should have taken particular Notice of such Texts. But to a *general Suggestion*, that there are in the Old Testament many Passages against me; I can only make a *general Reply*, that upon the carefullest Search I find no such Passages there.

But the Reason (it seems) why you alleged no particular Texts, was, because there had already *come forth a Book*, under the *Preface*, same Title you had designed for your *Trea-* pag. 2.
tise; [viz. *The True Scripture-Doctrine of* *Preface*,
the Trinity;] which though but a *Part of* pag. 1.
what was designed, yet carries in it Alone a
SUFFICIENT ANSWER to Dr Clarke's
Book: Upon the Sight whereof you rejoiced,
as on other Accounts, so particularly because
you were hereby excused from giving your-
self any Further Trouble, as to what was
contained in the Body of Dr Clarke's Book.
 I profess, Sir, when I first read this Passage
 of yours, I could hardly perswade myself
 but that I had some way or other mistaken
 your meaning, and that it was impossible
 Dr

pag. 66.

Dr Wells should commend That Book. But so it is : The Book which Dr Wells here recommends so seriously, and with a Profession that he is *Not in the least Ashamed to Own Publickly his Name* ; is a Book written by some *Rosacruzian* Author, turning all Religion (though possibly not so intended by the Author himself,) into manifest Ridicule. I had thought it a shame to take any Notice of so strange a Writer, and was willing to have passed him by in Silence : But since so learned a Man as Dr Wells, has in earnest, (if indeed it be in earnest,) recommended the Book as *a SUFFICIENT ANSWER to Dr Clarke's Book* ; and since those who never saw the Book, may possibly be induced, upon Dr Wells's Authority, to think there may be some Argument in it ; The Reader will pardon me if I give him a short Specimen, what Kind of a Writer it is, that he finds thus recommended to him.

pag. 54.

“ Gen. 14; 19, 20. *Blessed be Abram of the most High God, possessor of Heaven and Earth : And Blessed be the most high God.*
 “ THUS the Church of England ; O Holy Trinity, *have mercy upon us.*

pag. 55.

“ Gen. 21, 33. *Abraham——called there on the Name of the Lord, the everlasting God.*
 “ Hebrew

“ Hebrew is, קרא בשם. I take it to signify,
 “ *preached in the Name.* But if the learned will rather have קרא to signify, *calling upon*, that is, *praying to*; THEN it will
 “ follow, that they worshipped the *Trinity*
 “ in the Name of the Mediatour, OR the
 “ Father in the Name of the Son.

“ His being the Word or Son of God, does *pag. 62.*
 “ not take away from his being THAT
 “ very God, whose Word or Son he is.

“ Gen. 4, 3. — *An Offering unto the Lord.* *pag. 69.*
 “ *Heb. Jehovah.*
 “ *Note*; The Holy Ghost SEEMS to have
 “ been adored HERE, as One with the Father and the Son.

“ Gen. 24, 26. *Bowed his Head, and worshipped the Lord, and said*; *Blessed be the*
 “ *Lord God of my Master Abraham.*
 “ *Note*; This SEEMS to have been an
 “ Act of Worship to the *whole Trinity*, by the
 “ Mediation of the Son. FOR it seems to
 “ have been the *Spirit*, that first moved Abraham to leave his Country; And it was the
 “ Son who appeared to him; — And it seems
 “ to have been the *Father* who is said to have
 “ Sworn to him. Now SINCE Abraham
 “ was justified by Faith in Christ, and
 “ SINCE This Faith teaches us to address
 “ the Deity as Three in One by the Mediatour;
 “ it cannot be thought unreasonable to
 “ assert This.

pag. 79.

“ *Cain* was rejected, because he had not
 “ the Faith which made *Abel* accepted. —
 “ It is certain he did not offer to the *Trinity* :
 “ For had he believed Three Persons, he
 “ MUST also have believed that the Son
 “ would one day become Man, and atone for
 “ his Sins ; AND have been justified by
 “ That Faith, as well as *Abel*.

pag. 81.

“ Gen. 28, 21. *The Lord shall be my God.*
 “ The *Trinity* in Unity, by the Mediati-
 “ on of the Son.

pag. 85.

“ Rev. 1, 8. *Which is and which was and*
 “ *which is to come.* The Greek is, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν
 “ καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ; Which may be thus rendred,
 “ *Ille Ens tam qui fuit quàm qui erit,* The Is-
 “ ing both which was and which will be.

pag. 89.

“ Joh. 17 ; 18, 19. *As thou hast Sent me*
 “ *into the World, even so——for their Sakes*
 “ *I sanctify myself.*
 “ *That is ; SEND myself.*

pag. 98 &
99.

“ I would here propose to the Learned,
 “ whether we may not take the words, *HOLT*
 “ *FATHER*, in the Prayer of our Saviour,
 “ *Joh. 17, 11,* to be spoken to the Deity in
 “ the Person of the *HOLT GHOST*, as
 “ well as of the *FATHER*.—— The words
 “ seem capable of This Paraphrase : O GOD,
 “ keep

(II)

“ keep Thou in thine own Name or Power IN
“ THE PERSON OF THE HOLT
“ GHOST, those whom Thou, in the PER-
“ SON OF THE FATHER, hast gi-
“ ven Me the SON of Thee O FATHER,
“ and of Thee O HOLT SPIRIT.

“ If we render with the 70 and vulgar pag. 106.
“ Version, Ps. 24, 7, O ye Princes, lift up your
“ Gates, (or Portcullices which were drawn
“ up;) One may rationally conclude, that
“ during our LORD's continuance upon
“ Earth, the Celestial Government was in
“ Commission, and managed by Angels; who
“ were THUS taught to know his Person
“ again, as being the same Jehovah who laid
“ down That Shecinah, and now is in our
“ Nature.

“ Job 12, 12. With the Antient, is Wisdom; pag. 135.
“ [and in length of days, Understanding.]
“ Heb. With the ANTIENTS is WIS-
“ DOM: That is, With the Father and Son,
“ is the Holy Spirit. Note here, the Unity of
“ the Nature of the Three Persons, proving the
“ Existence of the Son to be without dividing the
“ Nature, as calling both the Father and Son by
“ the same Name ANTIENTS.

“ Job 31; 1, 2. Why then should I look up- pag. 137.
“ on a Maid?

“ For what portion of God is there, &c.

“ I render, as in the Heb And what should
“ I consider in the Virgin, even what is the Part

“ of God &c. It is DIFFICULT to put any
 “ other construction on the Words than This,
 “ which shew Job’s humble Faith, without cu-
 “ rious searching into the mysterious Incarna-
 “ tion of God the Son, who was the Almigh-
 “ ty, born of a Virgin, by the Power of the
 “ Highest, that is, the Holy Ghost.

pag. 144.

“ Job 12, 12. *With the Antients is Wisdom.*
 “ Heb. *IN the Antients is Wisdom* ; That is,
 “ *In the Father and the Son is the Holy Ghost.*
 “ Note ; The Originating of the Spirit of
 “ God, is here declared to be a distinction in
 “ Person, but not a division in Nature. He
 “ is said to be, *IN the Antients*, not *OUT*
 “ *OF the Antients* ; that is, One with them
 “ in Nature.

pag. 149.

“ Job 1, 24. *The Name of the Lord.*
 “ Heb. *The Name Jehovah* : That is, the
 “ Son of God, in whom the Trinity is wor-
 “ shipped, and CONSEQUENTLY the
 “ Notice thereof is implied in This Expres-
 “ sion.

ibid.

“ Job 11, 7. *Canst thou by searching find out*
 “ *God.*
 “ The Oeconomy of our Salvation (as it
 “ appears from other places) was known at
 “ this Time ; And THEN we may safely
 “ take the Title, GOD, in This place, for
 “ the Holy Trinity.

“ Passages

- " Passages in *Job*, in which is declared pag. 150.
" what Worship was in His days paid to the
" Holy Trinity.
" *Job* 1, 21. *Blessed be the Name of the*
" LORD.
" 11, 13. *Stretch out thine Hands towards*
" HIM.
" 15, 3. *Calleth upon GOD.*
" 15, 20. *Mine Eye poureth out Tears to*
" GOD.
" 22, 23. *Lift up thy Face to GOD.*
" 33, 29. *All these things worketh GOD*
" OFTENTIMES. *Heb. is, God in*
" three Proceedings, *in, with, or by the Mighty*
" One.

- " The Penitent Believer is pardoned by pag. 180.
" *God the Father* as of *RIGHT*, though
" This *Right* is obtained by the *Free Grace* of
" * *God the Son*. So that, though we are
" *FREELY* pardoned, yet this Pardon to
" the Penitent is *DUE*.

* It seems then, in this Author's System of Divinity, there is no Free Grace at all, of God the Father.

And Now, is not This indeed a *Worthy Answerer*, as Dr *Wells* styles him, pag. 2^d of his *Preface*? And was it not very reasonably to be expected, that I should have written a Book in Reply to so Worthy an Author?

Pref. pag.
2.

thor? Indeed, I should Now have been very much ashamed to have transcribed such *foolish* (not to say *profane*) Stuff, had not so considerable a Man as Dr *Wells* has been thought to be, soberly affirmed that *it carries in it Alone a SUFFICIENT ANSWER to Dr Clarke's Book : Upon the Sight whereof he rejoiced, as on Other Accounts, so particularly because he was hereby excused from giving himself any further Trouble, as to what was contained in the Body of Dr Clarke's Book.*

What you lay down, pag. 6 and 7, concerning the *Use of Reason* in reading the Scriptures, is very *True*, but proves nothing against *Me*. For, the Inference you draw, *viz.* that *Reason* directs Men to use the Assistance of the Primitive Fathers in understanding the Scripture, is what I readily allow; and I add, that it directs them likewise, according to the best of their Capacities, to use the Assistance of Modern Commentators, and other Learned Divines. But if you mean that the Primitive Fathers have any *Authority* to determine Mens Judgment concerning the Sense of Scripture, any further than the *Reasons* they allege, convince Men that such or such an Interpretation is indeed the True Meaning of the Text; this I can by no means assent to. And, supposing their *Authority* to be
what

what you please ; yet that their *Judgment* is *against Me* in the present Controversy, as you most unreasonably Suppose without any Proof throughout your whole Book, and as an unlearned Reader must needs, by your frequent and positive repeating of it, be led to imagine ; this (though you must take notice it is no part of the Question,) is what I absolutely deny. Concerning which matter, I shall have occasion presently to speak more particularly.

You affirm, that *a Supernatural Truth* pag. 9. *may not be so clearly Revealed in Scripture, as to leave no room for doubting What is the true Sense of Scripture concerning it : Namely, because Divine Providence may have provided such external Helps, as Reason (if duly attended to, and its Dictates not overruled by Prejudice or the like,) will tell us are Proper and Sufficient to determine the True Sense of Scripture in the point controverted.* And, (pag. 13,) that *the Scripture is not in itself so clear as to the Doctrine of the Trinity, but to require the Taking in of external Helps, to decide the True Sense of it.*

That *the Best Assistances* (pag. 13) *are to be procured from those Antient Writers that lived in the First Ages of Christianity, that is, before or at the Council of Nice : That the Testimonies of the Antient Writers* (pag.

(pag. 18) must in reason be acknowledged to be the Best PROOFS, that Texts are really Proofs of what they are brought to prove ; And whosoever refuses to admit of the Testimonies of the Antient Writers, as the Best Proofs in deciding the True Sense of Scripture ; does in effect take upon himself alone to decide the same by a bare Teste Meipso : That there is a rational Expedient (pag. 21) preserved by the good Providence of God, namely by Referring the Cause to be Decided by the Testimony of the Primitive Church, that is, by the Concurrent Testimony of those Antient Writers that lived in the Three first Ages of Christianity : That a Mans Best Understanding (pag. 25) will and must in this case Always necessitate him to believe That to be the Doctrine of Christ, which he finds confirmed by the joint Testimonial Authority of the Antient Writers of the Primitive Church : That the want of Recourse being had by Divines (pag. 58) to the said Antient Writers, and of just Defe-
 rence to their Testimonies, is a thing very destructive of Religion, and the Cause of almost all divisions among Christians : And that to act (pag. 65) without having due regard to the Primitive Writers, is no other than for Men to lean to their Own Understanding.

That the Antient Writers (pag. 14) are of the greatest Authority ; That Men are obliged, at their utmost Peril, to have re-

course to the Testimonies of the foresaid Antient Writers, as of the Greatest Authority for deciding the True Sense of Scripture ; And that if the Antient Writers (pag. 43) be really of No Authority, what need Dr Clarke trouble himself in the least, whether they were, or were not, of his Opinion ?

Now to all This, I answer :

I. Were the Scripture-Revelation of any particular Doctrine, like the Heathen pretended Oracles of old, only *One single obscure Sentence* ; it might indeed with some Colour of Reason have been alleged, that for the right understanding of it, it were necessary to depend on Other following Authorities. But the case of the Scripture-Revelation, is far otherwise. Our *Saviours* own Discourses are here set down *at large*, in no less than *Four different Gospels* : The Doctrine his *Disciples* preached afterwards, is recorded *distinctly* more than once, in the *Acts of the Apostles* : And the Controversies that arose in their own times, gave occasion further for very *large and particular Explications* of that whole Doctrine, in their several *Epistles*. There are contained in the New Testament *twenty-seven several Books*, written at *different Times* and in *different Places* by *eight several inspired Authors* : And the Texts of each Author may, in case of difficulty, be compared with *other Texts* of the *same Author* in *other parts* of

the *same Book*, and with other Texts of the same Author in *different Books* written upon other occasions, and moreover with the Texts of *other inspired Authors* writing likewise upon the same Subject. And can it enter into the Heart of any reasonable Man to imagine, that after all this, any doctrine of importance should not in *such* a revelation, in *such large*, *such explicit*, *such repeated* instructions, be made known as *fully*, as *clearly and distinctly*, as the Revealer of it intended it should be known at all? The Writings of any *uninspired Author* are usually well enough understood, by impartial Persons comparing one place of his Writings with another, and considering without prejudice what is the Design of the Author in the result of the whole: And is the *Scripture alone* such a Book, as, in doctrines of great *importance*, and mentioned in almost *every Page* of the Book, nevertheless by the most diligent Study and by the most careful comparing of the several Texts one with another, and interpreting the figurative expressions by the plain ones, cannot at last be understood without some *New Authoritative Explication*? For instance: as to the doctrine of the *Trinity* in particular, Are there in the New Testament *more than 500 several Texts*, from whence the True understanding of that doctrine is to be fetched; and shall not a reasonable and unprejudiced

prejudiced Man, by carefully comparing together those 500 Texts, be inabled to understand so much of that doctrine, as was intended to be revealed to him in That Book ? That is ; shall he not understand *so much* of the doctrine, as properly concerns *Religion* ; though he understand not the *metaphysical* or *philosophical part*, which was never intended to be revealed ? Undeniably, if in such a Case the Scripture could not be sufficiently understood by such diligent Study and Attention, (as you constantly suppose it can not ;) it would necessarily follow from This opinion of yours, that the Scripture, (being, even in matters of great importance, more difficult to be understood than any other Book in the World,) ought by all means to be taken from the people, and the more clear and certain Interpretations put in its place : Which is the very Essence of *Popery*. Yes ; but (you will say) there was a *Good Reason* why a Supernatural Truth might be revealed but obscurely in Scripture ; *viz.* *because Divine Providence may have provided* pag. 9: *such EXTERNAL HELPS, as Reason* (if duly attended to, and its Dictates not over-ruled by Prejudice or the like,) will tell us are Proper and Sufficient to Determine the True Sense of Scripture in the point controverted ; and because there is a rational pag. 21. *EXPEDIENT* preserved by the good

*Providence of God, namely by REFER-
RING the Cause to be Decided by the Testi-
mony of the Primitive Church, And is not
This a fine Circle ; to suppose Providence
has in Scripture given us a Revelation of a
particular Doctrine in more than 500 Texts,
only in order to Refer the Cause to be de-
cided by certain following uninspired Wri-
ters ? to suppose that God should appoint
Infallible Writers, merely to Refer a Cause
to be decided by Fallible ones ? that is, that
the Scripture should be written, not to be
appealed to, but to be appealed from, in mat-
ters of Controversy ? Is not the Scripture,
in This way of arguing, a fine Rule of
Faith ; and the Protestant Religion built
upon a noble Foundation ? Suppose a Pa-
pist should affirm, (as Those of That Com-
munion have often done,) that *Transub-
stantiation*, and the obligation of paying
*Mediatorial Worship to the Blessed Virgin and
to Saints and Angels*, is very obscure in
Scripture, on Purpose that the Cause might
be *Referred to be decided by the Primitive
Fathers of the Church* ; Must a Protestant
first be obliged to peruse the Writings of
all these Fathers, before he can return such
a person an Answer ? and shall it not be
sufficient for him to reply, that he is Sure
he finds not these things in Scripture, and
therefore they are not at all the Commands
of God revealed to him in that Book ?
Well ;*

Well ; But supposing the Cause *was referred* from *Scripture*, to be decided by the *Fathers* : Are we hereby ever the nearer ? Are the *Fathers* more *easy to be understood*, than the *Scripture* ? or do they so *certainly and infallibly agree among Themselves*, as the Books of the inspired Writers do ? Shall *five hundred Texts* not be enough to inform a Man sufficiently concerning a doctrine of Truth, and shall he be able to find it with more Certainty in the *Fathers* ? If the *Scripture* cannot be understood, unless the *Fathers* interpret it to him ; who shall in the next place interpret to him *That Interpretation* ? and who shall explain to him the *True Meaning* of the *Fathers*, and reconcile to him all their *seeming and real differences* ? For, learned Men, (you know,) of *All* opinions, and in *All* Churches, have always claimed to themselves the Authority of the *Fathers* : And the Authority of *One Father* has in most Controversies been confidently cited against *Himself*, and against the Authority of *Others in the same Age*, and against the Authority of *Others in different Ages*. For though, generally speaking, the Meaning of any one Father, in like manner as the Meaning of *Scripture* itself and of all other Books whatsoever, is in the whole intelligible enough to persons unprejudiced and not engaged in Controversy ; yet to Men concerned in any Disputes, the

Fathers

Fathers are (when compared together) at least as difficult, (I think, much more difficult) to be understood, than Scripture ; and have much more need of some *Infallible Judge*, to interpret their Meaning and to reconcile their different manners of Expression. What *Petavius* and other learned Writers, both Popish and Protestant, have published upon this Subject ; is a most undeniable Demonstration of This Truth.

2. Nevertheless, though I think it thus the most evident of all controverted Points, and indeed the Sole Foundation of the Protestant Religion, that the *Scripture* is the *Whole and Only Rule of Truth* in matters of divine Revelation ; and that All necessary and important Doctrines therein contained, may be well and sufficiently understood, by carefully comparing together the several Texts that relate to Such Doctrine : Yet, as it is necessary, in order to such a comparing of Texts, that a Man understand the Language wherein the Texts were written, (or else that he be well assured of the Fidelity of the Translation, *concerning which matter I shall have occasion presently to add something further :*) And as, in order to his rightly understanding the particular Phrases and Idioms of that Language, it is very advisable that he consult the Commentaries of Learned Divines, and consider the Reasons they offer for and against such
and

and such Rendrings of particular Phrases : So, concerning the *Antient Fathers* likewise, I agree it to be extremely advisable, that as Many as have Abilities, should consult *Them* also, and take in all the Assistance they can from *Their* Writings, by learning from them the Antient Use of Phrases in the Language they wrote in, by finding the Opinions that prevailed in the several Times and Churches wherein they lived, and by considering carefully the Reasons they allege, why particular Texts were in Their days understood in such or such particular Senses.

3. But now All This, is not (in propriety of Speech) ascribing any *AUTHORITY* to them. There is indeed a Sense of the word, *Authority* ; in which it may rightly be said, that the *Primitive Writers* are of *Great Authority*. The Opinion or Judgment of every *Learned Man*, carries with it *an Authority* ; not to oblige Me to be of His opinion because it is *His*, (for This is peculiar to Inspired Writers only ;) but it ought to carry with it such *Weight*, as to oblige me to consider carefully the Reasons which moved *Him*, and which He alleges in order to move *Me* likewise, to be of That Opinion. Now in like manner as *Great Learning*, so *Great Antiquity* also carries with it in This Sense a sort of *Authority* : Not a Power of obliging any Man to

to give his Assent implicitly ; but only a Power of *so far* influencing a Man's Opinion, as the Author's Skill in his own and the Scripture-language, and his better Knowledge of the Facts which happened near his own Time, compared with what has at the same time been said by Other Writers who had the same Advantages, ought to have its just Weight among Other considerations, in determining the Judgment of a reasonable and unprejudiced Man. But, in your Remarks, *you* either *yourself* use the word, *Authority*, in Another Sense ; or, at least, (considering how much, and to how Fatal a purpose, this word has constantly been abused by the Writers of the Romish Church, almost to the Total destruction of Christian Knowledge,) you have by no means been careful to prevent your *unlearned Reader* from being mis-led into a very wrong and most pernicious Sense of the word. For when you affirm, that possibly

pag. 9. *a supernatural Truth may not be so clearly*
 pag. 14. *revealed in Scripture, but Men are obliged*
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 R E

REFERRED to be decided by the Testimony of the Primitive Church;—some of which conversed with the Apostles themselves, and so cannot be reasonably supposed but to have INFALLIBLY Known the True Sense of Scripture, and CONSEQUENTLY to have Delivered the same, both in their Own Writings, and to Those with whom they conversed; By which means, those that lived in the THIRD Age may likewise be reasonably supposed to have had opportunity sufficient to know CERTAINLY the true Sense of Scripture, either by perusing the Writings of many such as had conversed with the Apostles themselves or their immediate Successors, or else by Conversing with many such as had Conversed with the immediate Successors of the Apostles: What is This, but affirming that Uninspired Writers which followed after, were, by the Help of I know not what Tradition, able to express a doctrine of Christ more clearly and intelligibly, more properly and wisely, than the Inspired Writers themselves were able to do, even in more than 500 Texts that relate to That Doctrine?

4. But after All, let the *Authority* of the Primitive Fathers be what it will, and even as Great as you yourself suppose it; yet it will be nothing at all to Your purpose. For though you confidently affirm, that I re-pag. 35.ject the Catholick Doctrine of the Primitive
D Church;

Church; (meaning by the *Primitive Church*,
 That of the *Three* first Ages, as you ex-
 pressly declare, pag. 13 and 21 :) that I
 pag. 41. am not to be convinced of my Errors by the
 Testimony of the *Antient Writers*; that my
 pag. 43. Notions are inconsistent with the Testimonies
 of the *Antient Writers*; that it necessarily
 pag. 45. follows that my *Scripture-doctrine* of the Tri-
 nity is FALSELY so called, as being in-
 consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity re-
 ceived and maintained by the *Antient Wri-*
 pag. 44, 55. *ters*; and that the *True Scripture-doctrine*
 of the Trinity, as understood by the *Primitive*
Catholick Church, is opposite to Dr Clarke's
Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity falsely so
 called; and always take this for Granted,
 in all your Arguments through your whole
 Book: Yet the Reader must know, that All
 This is merely extravagant Confidence, with-
 out any Foundation and without any Co-
 lour of Truth. An innocent unlearned
 Reader indeed, must needs be led to ima-
 gine, from your Manner of writing, that
 it was without all question a yielded and
 uncontroverted point, that every One of
 the Fathers in the whole Three first Cen-
 turies did clearly, unanimously, and in a
 most constant and uniform manner, contra-
 dict my Notion and confirm yours. But
 have you, for This, brought any the least
 Shadow or Appearance of Proof? Have
 you alleged the Testimonies of Any of those

Primitive

Primitive Fathers ? On the contrary, have not I cited out of them *Numerous most express and positive Testimonies* in favour of what I advanced ? and made it appear by *their own plain and undeniable words*, that they generally interpreted the *Texts* of the New Testament in the very same manner as I did ? Have You, or the Other Person you refer to as a Sufficient Answerer, offered any thing at all to *invalidate* these Citations of mine ? or so much as attempted to give your Readers Any Reason to believe, that Those Fathers understood the Texts otherwise than I do ? Now therefore either these Fathers *were consistent Writers*, and entirely agreeing both with Themselves and with each Other ; or they *were not*. If they *were*, (as your Discourse every where supposes ;) then it was incumbent upon you in Justice, before you concluded against me, to have reconciled All my Citations out of them to your own Notion, and to have shown that those Citations did not necessarily infer what I deduced from them ; (which I am perswaded the Wit of Man cannot do, and the most learned both of Protestant and Popish Writers have freely acknowledged that 'tis impossible to do it :) But if the Fathers *were not* consistent Writers ; then, though you *should* allege some single passages out of them in Favour of *your* Notion, (as I have cited very Many

from them most fully expressive of *mine*,) yet That will not by any means make good your Assertion. That which seems to Me the fair Truth of the case, (and of which every Reader that has Ability and a Desire to know the full State of this matter, must judge for Himself, by perusing the Books themselves, and not contenting himself with seeing single Citations collected only on One side,) is This: that the *generality* of the Writers *before* the Council of Nice, were in the whole clearly on *my side*: though some particular passages may be picked out of them, which will seem to look the contrary way: and that the *generality* of Writers *after* the Time of that Council, were in the main *against* me: yet so, as that out of *Them*, (especially in their Interpretation of Texts of Scripture relating to this Controversy,) as many or more passages in proportion may be alleged *for* me, than out of the *antienter* Writers can be brought *against* me. And if you please to look into the Learned Dr Cudworth's Intellectual System, *from pag. 60 to pag. 612*, you will find he has largely and undeniably proved, that the Notice the *Nicene Fathers themselves* professed, was entirely different from and inconsistent with Yours: As I shall presently have occasion to show more particularly. Thus, you see the Reason why I allowed not the *Prim*

tive Fathers to have properly any *Authority* in matters of Faith, was not (as you most unjustly and unreasonably would have your Reader take for granted,) that I knew them to be *against* me ; but on the contrary, because, though I knew (and *proved* it also by Numerous Citations) that they were generally *for* me, yet, in fairness of Argument, I resolved to lay no Stress upon them, because I would preserve entire to the *Scripture*, its being the *Whole and Only Rule of Truth* in matters of Revelation : Which is the Sole Foundation, upon which the Protestant Religion can possibly pretend to be maintained. Where now is the Conscience and Justice of affirming, as you do, *pag. 24*, that *Dr Clarke supposes a Man may, by the external Authority of the Primitive Church, or JOINT TESTIMONY of the Antient Writers of the First Ages, be bound to believe any thing to be the doctrine of Christ, which at the same time his Best Understanding necessitates him to believe is Not that Doctrine ?* When a Man writes in a Heat for what he is pleased in his own Fancy to call *Orthodoxy*, is it reasonable that he should thereby presently be discharged from having any sober Regard to *Truth and Right* ? Yet here again I must desire the Reader always to remember, that this Whole Debate concerning the Opinion of the Fathers, is *beside the main Question* : And
were

were it as certainly *True*, as it is a manifest and notorious *Mistake*, that the Primitive Fathers were *unanimously of Your Opinion*; yet it would avail nothing towards gaining your Point. For, I say again, the Scripture Only is, in matters of divine Revelation, the Rule of Truth.

You affirm (*pag. 16,*) that I charge *some of the most Celebrated Bishops and even Martyrs of the PRIMITIVE Church*, with endeavouring to prove something not very consistent with what they elsewhere assert: That I charge the Governours of the *PRIMITIVE Church* (*pag. 53, 54, 56,*) with growing Minute in determining Unnecessary Controversies, with being Uncharitable in their Censures, and with departing from the Fountain of Catholick Unity: And (*pag. 40,*) that as the Dr charges *THEM* with Not always speaking very consistently; so in the same page he charges *THEM* with frequently going about to affirm, and endeavouring to prove, something not very consistent with what they could not elsewhere forbear expressing clearly and distinctly; and likewise he represents *THEM*, as lying under the strongest and most settled Prejudices. Now This, though of no great moment to the Merits of the Cause, yet deserves to be taken notice of, that your own Conscience may reprove you for *Carelessness* at least.

For,

For, Who (I beseech you) does that word, *THEM*, refer to? Does it not, in each part of *your* Sentence, mean necessarily the *same* Persons? But in *my* Introduction I pag. 18. carefully distinguished the Writers *before* the Council of *Nice*, (to whom you your self also confine the word *Primitive*,) from those who wrote *after* it; And what I said about *Prejudices*, is there expressly applied to the *Later Writers only*, in contradistinction to the *Earlier* ones: And when I had said, *many Antient Writers expressed my Notion clearly and distinctly, even FREQUENTLY* when at the same time they were about to affirm, and endeavouring to prove, something not very consistent with it; I distinctly explained my Meaning after the following manner, in the very next words; *The greatest part of the Writers Before and At the time of the Council of Nice, were (I think) Really of That Opinion, (though they do not always speak very clearly and consistently,) which I have endeavoured to set forth in those Propositions; But as to the Writers After that Time, the Reader must not wonder if Many Passages not consistent with (nay, perhaps contrary to) those which are here cited, shall by Any One be alleged out of the same Authors; For I do not cite places out of THESE [these Later] Authors, so much to show what was the Opinion of the Writers themselves, as to show how naturally*

turally Truth sometimes prevails by its own native clearness and evidence, even against the strongest and most settled Prejudices; [That is; how Men are frequently compelled to acknowledge such Premises to be true, as necessarily infer a Conclusion contrary to what they intend to establish.] And what
pag. 7. *I said about Mens being Minute in determining unnecessary Controversies, and imposing things much harder to be understood than the Scripture itself, and becoming more uncharitable in their Censures, and departing from the Fountain of Catholick Unity, the Apostolical Form of Sound Words; was likewise plainly meant of those who lived After your primitive period of Three Centuries; though these Corruptions did indeed, in some measure, begin sooner; (as appears from the Practise of Valentinus, Montanus, Tertullian and others;) and This evil Spirit, like all others, grew up by Degrees: According to that Prophecy of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 4, 4 The Time will come, when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but——shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables.*

Your Observation, (*pag. 27,*) that in affirming *a Man must of necessity at last understand with his OWN Understanding and not ANOTHERS*, is the same in effect as to say, that *he must of necessity at last*

come to a right Understanding of any thing,
 SOLELY by his OWN Understanding,
without the HELP of any OTHERS;
 is beneath the Gravity of a serious Writer.
 For though you are pleased to play with
 the words, and amuse your Reader for two
 or three pages; yet you well knew, my
 Meaning was not, that *the Means whereby* pag. 25.
a Man comes to a right understanding of a
thing, is Solely by his Own Understanding,
without the Help of any Other's Understand-
ing; but that, after he has procured from
 Others all the Help he can, his Judgment
 must finally be determined by the *Reason*
of the thing itself, and not by the *Opinion*
he has conceived of the Ability or Honesty of
the Persons, the Help of whose Reasons he
 makes use of. For example: In order to
 understand rightly the Meaning of any
 Text or Texts of Scripture, my judgment
 must finally be determined, not by any
 Opinion I may have conceived of the *Abili-*
ty and Honesty of such and such Fathers or
Commentators, (which is what *You* would
 have, upon a wonderful groundless Imagi-
 nation of the Fathers being on your side;) *but*
 it must be determined by what appears
 to Me to be *the Signification of the Words*
themselves, after I have seriously consider'd
 the Text, and compared it with other
 Texts, and with what as many either An-
 cient Fathers, or Modern Commentators,

or Living Teachers have said upon it, as I happen to have Ability and Opportunity of consulting.

But here follows, you think, an unanswerable Argument. *The Original Revelation of the Old Testament, (you say, pag. 27,) is in the Hebrew and Chaldee Tongues; and the Original Revelation of the New Testament, is in the Greek: You ask therefore, What they who know neither Greek nor Hebrew, nor Chaldee, and who make the far greatest part of Christians, must do to know the Sense of Scripture? Are not These under a Necessity of Relying on the Translation made of the original Revelation into their Native Tongue, or else (which comes to the same) on WHATEVER their Particular Teachers shall tell them is the Sense of the Original Revelations? The same thing you repeat again, pag. 28. And the Inference you draw from it, pag. 29, is This: As the divine Providence has and still does raise up Men of Learning enough, to Translate or understand the Original Languages; and of Integrity enough, not wilfully to corrupt or recede from the Sense of the Original Revelation; So, by parity of Reason, notwithstanding the True Sense of Scripture, concerning some most important Points of Religion, is not to be so Clearly known from Scripture itself, as to leave no room for Doubt;*

Doubt ; and the said Doubt is not to be removed by any more Rational Means, than Recourse to the joint Testimonies of the Antient Writers ; yet it is not reasonably to be denied but God has made suitable Provision for the Salvation of all Men, inasmuch as his Providence has and does still raise up Men of Learning enough to understand the Antient Writers, and of Integrity enough not wilfully to corrupt or recede from their Meaning, or That Sense wherein they understood the Scripture as to the controverted Points of Religion. 'Tis very wonderful, Sir, a Man of your Abilities should not perceive, that this Argument of yours makes all Religions equal, and consequently supposes that there is no such Thing as True Religion at all. For if the far greatest part of *pag. 27.* Christians (as you affirm,)—are under a Necessity of Relying—on **WHATEVER** their Particular Teachers shall tell them is the **SENSE** of the original Revelations ; Then, since the joint Testimonies of the Antient Writers are to determine That Sense ; *pag. 29.* and since all denominations of Christians, whether Popish or Protestant, cannot but think their own Particular Teachers (or else they would not follow them) to be Men of Learning enough to understand the Antient Writers, and of Integrity enough not wilfully to corrupt or recede from their Meaning ; here are plainly all Religions put upon an

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equal

equal Foot; or rather, That which has the greatest Numbers on its side, will always have the Advantage; or else we are of necessity gotten into that endless Circle, that the *True Church* can only be discerned by first understanding the True Sense of *Scripture*, and yet that at the same time the True Sense of *Scripture* can only be learnt from the *True Church*. But (thanks be to God,) both the Foundation itself of your Argument, and That which you build upon it, are entirely erroneous. No Christians are under a Necessity of relying on the Judgment of their Particular Translators, but only those *Blind Followers of the Blind*, who are willing to have both the Original and the Translation also taken from them, that they may securely walk after their Teachers *into the Ditch*. All Others look upon it to be not only Lawful, but their Duty also, to see as much as possible with their own Eyes. And very Much of this is possible, even to mean Capacities, who are sincerely desirous not to be deceived. They can read or hear the Whole Scripture, and compare one part of it with another, and interpret the figurative expressions by the plain ones, and observe how Men of different Opinions understand words; and can collect their Duty, not from single controverted Texts, but from those numerous plain and often-repeated instructions,

which

which the generality of Learned Men sufficiently agree both as to the Translation and the Sense. For, as the Truth and Uncorruptness of the *original Text it self* is made known to Christians, not by the *Authority* of their Particular Teachers, but by the Testimony of *Friends and Enemies*, Men of *All opinions* in All Ages from the Beginning, whose *different Interests and Opinions* made it impossible for them to agree either in deceiving or being deceived ; (which is the Greatest Evidence a *Matter of Fact* is capable of;) and This extends to the *whole Text*, excepting only a Very few *various Readings* of any Importance, concerning which all capable persons are still at liberty to judge : So the Truth and Goodness of any *Translation*, is made known to those who use it, not by the *Authority* of their Particular Teachers, but by its having been examined and compared by Men of *different Opinions*, whose Interest has engaged them to discover Faults where there are any ; By which means, a Translation, in a Free Country, cannot but be in the main agreeable to the Original ; and where it is so controverted in any particular passage, as that the Reasons for *different Rendings* seem on Both sides equal, it is There not only lawful, but Mens Duty to look upon the Translation as of *no sufficient Authority*, if they have any regard to Truth in the matter

matter of their Religion. But supposing it *were* True, as it is a great Mistake, that Men must needs trust their Particular Teachers for the *Truth of a Translation*; that is, for the Truth of the *Matter of Fact*, that This or That is the Text of Scripture; would it from thence follow, that they must likewise as blindly trust them for the *Sense and Meaning* of the words; that is, in a matter, not of *Fact*, but of *Judgment*? Supposing it *were* necessary, that the Authority of particular Men must be trusted in *some Respects*, because (suppose) in those particular respects there was no other possible means of knowlege, and Men can do no more towards informing themselves than is possible for them to do; would it therefore follow that they must trust likewise in *Other Respects*, where there is No such necessity? And must *They* also who *do* understand Languages, trust entirely to the Ability and Fidelity of *Others*, as well as *They* who do *not* understand them? Verily, Sir, according to *your* Scheme of Divinity, no possible reason can be given, why it would not be much better to take the Scriptures quite away from the people; and not from the people only, but from the greatest part even of the Learned also. For if the *Scripture* (how plain soever the Words themselves may happen to be) must of necessity be understood to mean

neither

neither more nor less than what the *Fathers* say it means ; and the *Fathers* (how plain soever Their words also, may happen to be) must of necessity be understood to mean neither more nor less than what the Particular Teachers of every Church say they mean ; 'tis evident there can be no other Use of publishing the *Scripture* (nay, and the *Fathers* too) to the World, but only to disturb this happy Tranquillity, and give Occasion for Men, by judging for themselves, to run the hazard of differing sometimes from one another in opinion.

But you proceed, (*pag. 30*) and ask ; Upon what grounds does Dr Clarke believe the several Books of the Old or New Testament to have been written by those Inspired Writers, to whom they are ascribed ? Is it not, because they have been Believed so to be by Other Christians, through the several Ages of Christianity up to the First Age, wherein they were Known to be such by the Christians then Living ? And if Dr Clarke's Belief of the Books of the Bible to be the Inspired Revelation of God, is thus founded on the Belief of Others ; I would fain know why his Belief of Any Article of Religion CONTAINED IN THE SAID INSPIRED REVELATION, may not likewise be founded on the Belief of Others ; namely as a Ground of his own Belief ; as a
good

good Ground, that *What he believes, he believes in the True Sense of Scripture, because he believes it in That Sense, wherein it has been believed through the several Ages of Christianity up to the First, wherein it was known to be the True Sense of Scripture.* To the first part of this your Question, I answer: I believe the Books of Scripture to have been written by those Inspired Writers whose Names they bear, not upon the Authority of any Particular Teachers, but upon the agreeing Evidence of *Friends and Enemies* of all Sorts, of Christians of *different Opinions*, and of *Jews and Heathens*; the Books having been cited by innumerable opposite Writers in all Ages and in different Languages, and dispersed both in the Original and in numerous agreeing Translations through all Countries, from the Beginning. And this is the *proper Evidence* of a *Matter of Fact*. But now as to the *Sense and Meaning*, of Words agreed to be the genuine Text; (which is a Question, not of *Fact*, but of *Judgment*;) this is to be determined, not by *Tradition*, but by *Reason and good Understanding*. And, if it was to be determined by *Tradition*; yet for you in the present case to pretend (contrary to the full Evidence of all History extant in the World) that there is as universal a Tradition for the Texts of Scripture having been, from the Beginning interpreted

terpreted according to Your Notion, as there is for the Books of Scripture having been written by Those whose Names they bear ; is to pretend that the Darknes of Midnight, is equal in Brightness to the Sun shining at Noon-day. To the *second* part of your Question, I answer : that my *Belief of any Article of Religion* pag. 31. *CONTAINED IN THE SAID INSPIRED REVELATION*, is not *founded on the Belief of Others*, namely on Their believing it *to be the True Sense of Scripture* ; but it is founded wholly upon my Seeing it to be (what in your Question you suppose it Is,) *CONTAINED IN THE SAID INSPIRED REVELATION*.

But you go on ; *pag. 32.* *Though the words, Bishop and Presbyter, for instance, are used promiscuously in Scripture, yet surely Dr Clarke will not say, that I confound and blend the Antient Writers with Scripture, because I look on Their Testimonies as a Decisive Proof, that there were notwithstanding Three Distinct Orders of the Ministry in the Time of the Apostles.* I readily acknowledge that the Testimonies of Antient Writers, when they agree, and so far as they agree, are a just and Decisive Proof of any Question of *Fact* relating to their own Times : But how This tends to prove, (what you

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would have,) that any Man can be obliged by the Opinion of Others, to believe any *Text of Scripture* to mean, what he himself cannot with the utmost Care perceive the words of That Text to signify; this I understand not.

and.

You add; *In like manner, although the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, are said (1 Joh. 5, 7,) to be only One, not explicitly One God, or of the same Divine Individual Essence; yet it will not follow—that I confound and blend the Antient Writers with Scripture; because I look upon Their Testimonies to be a sufficient Proof and Authority for believing Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be truly and properly One God, or of the same Divine Individual Essence; or that This is the True Sense where in St John understood them to be One.* Now by your manner of citing this Text here and again pag. 59; would not any unlearned Reader, depending upon your fidelity be led to imagine, that without Doubt this Text was unanimously understood in your Sense by *all the Primitive Fathers*? Whereas in Truth on the contrary, besides that the whole Text is wanting in all the *Antient Versions* in all Languages, and does not with any certainty appear to have ever been found so much as in any One Manuscript Copy of the *original Greek*, that

or ever Was in the World, but seems rather to have been first added in the Greek even after the Invention of Printing, (as you will find reason to think, if you consider carefully what *Erasmus* has said upon this Subject, and Dr *Mills* in his Dissertation on the Text, compared with his remarkable acknowledgment upon better information and second Thoughts, in his *Prolegomena*, † pag. 117, how he himself and the Writers before him had been *DECEIVED* in the

† Optandum omnino foret, — ut indicasset [*Rob. Stephanus*] de Codice quolibet, — integer fuerit, an imperfectus & mutilus; totumne N. T. contineret, an partem duntaxat; fuerint Evangeliorum, an Epistolarum &c. Absque huiusmodi aliquali notitiâ, perit maxima pars beneficii, quod ex MSS &c. Ne dicam, quod laxior iste & indefinitus de Codicibus sermo, trahat in falsa, uti forte fit, de S. Textu judicia. Quum *quindecim* Exemplarium meminerit *Robertus*, quis non statim eum totidem integros N. T. Codices nactum arbitraretur? Proclivis hic error; & in quem nemo, qui variantes lectiones ad Editionis *Roberti* tertiæ marginem interiorem positas non diligenter admodum & expresso expenderit, non facillimè labatur. Hoc certe errore cretiti haud pauci, cum in celebri illo S. *Joannis* loco de triplici testimonio *Patris, Verbi & S. Spiritus*, 1 Joh. 5, 7, *septem* duntaxat videant Exemplaria, in quibus omissum sit illud, ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ intrepide statim concludunt reliqua textum illum integrum, nullâque sui parte detruncatum representare; cum tamen istorum Codicum varietates ad marginem collocatas sedulò per N. T. expendenti constet, e *quindecim* codicibus *Stephanicis* non nisi *septem*, ad marginem istius loci notatos, *epistolam hanc Joannis* exhibere; reliquos omnes vel Evangeliorum esse, vel aliarum saltem N. T. partium. Quin haud semel cum *Amelotius*, alique, cum & *Nos ipsi*, in hac palæstrâ diutius paullo versati licet, examine Codicum istorum per omnes N. T. libros ex varietatibus haud dum factò, in eundem errorem incidimus.

the matter of *Stephens's Manuscripts* :) it has moreover never been cited by *Athanasius* or any of the numerous Writers in the whole *Arian Controversy* ; nor mentioned in the genuine Works of any *Greek Father* at all, either *before* the Council of *Nice*, or *after* it ; though many of them quote the words

That is : *It were to be wished, that Stephens had distinguished concerning every Manuscript, whether it was entire or imperfect, whether it contained the Whole New Testament or Part only, whether it was a Copy of the Gospels or Epistles. Without thus distinguishing, the Copies lose the greatest part of their Use : Not to say, that for want of such distinction, Men are often led into an erroneous Judgment concerning the Sacred Text. For instance : When Stephens mentions fifteen Copies Who would not presently imagine that he meant so many Entire Copies of the New Testament ? 'Tis a very natural Error, and which any one may easily fall into, if he does not carefully and with that very View consider the various Readings marked in the inner margin of his third Edition. 'Tis by This Mistake, that in That famous passage of St John, concerning the threefold Testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, 1 Joh. 5, 7 ; many persons, when they observe the words, in Heaven, [He should here rather have said, the whole 7th verse, and the words, on Earth, in the 8th verse, as appears by comparing together the several parts of his Dissertation,] to be wanting in on'y Seven of Stephens's Manuscripts, presently conclude, that, without doubt, the other Eight have That Text entire and perfect : Whereas in Truth, he that carefully observes the various Readings of Those Manuscripts, marked in the Margin through the Whole New Testament ; will find that, out of Stephens's fifteen Copies, those seven only, which are referred to at the margin of This Text, have this Epistle of St John at all ; all the rest, being Copies of the Gospels only, or of other parts of the New Testament. Into this Error, not only Amelot and Other Writers, but I myself also, though long employed in this very Study, had more than once fallen, before I had examined all the Copies by their various Readings through all the Books of the Whole New Testament. Mills Prolegomena, pag. 117.*

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immediately foregoing and following: Neither is it alleged by any *Latin Father* before *St Jerom*, excepting only (as Some think) in one passage of *Tertullian*, and in one of *Cyprian*: And of those Two passages, That of *Tertullian* is plainly not a citation of this Text, but the words of the Author himself; And that the Other of *Cyprian*, (if genuine, as I see no reason to doubt,) is only a mystical Interpretation of the following 8th Verse, and not a citation of the 7th, is more than probable, as well from the Testimony of *Eucherius* and the express Evidence of *Facundus* referred to by Dr *Mills*, as from the Text's being wanting in all even the Latin Copies both before and long after *Cyprian's* time. And even in the first *English Bibles* after the Reformation, in the Time of *Henry the 8th* and *Edward the 6th*, it was printed in a *different Character*, to signify its being wanting in the Original: Which Distinction came afterwards to be neglected. And the Sense of the Apostle is very complete *without* this Text, according to the following Reading of All the Greek Manuscripts and Antient Versions: *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came* [that was declared and manifested to be the Son of God,] *by Water* [at his Baptism, when there came a Voice

Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son;] *and* (by) *Blood*, [viz. by his Death and Resurrection :]—*And it is the Spirit* [the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the Power of Miracles granted to the Apostles,] *that beareth witness; because the Spirit is Truth: For there are Three that bear Record, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood; and these Three agree in One,* [or, as some Antient Writers read the Text, *these Three Are One,*] viz. *One Testimony*, that Jesus is the Son of God. These things ought not, in justice and fairness, to be concealed from the World, by so citing the Text in a point of controversy, as if there *never* had been *any controversy* about it, and as if *all Primitive Writers* (who indeed never cite it at all) had agreed with you, both in the citation and in the interpretation of the words. You ought *at least* to have acknowledged the *dubiousness* of the Text. And if the Text had been unquestionably genuine, yet you do not use the English Reader well, when you affirm that *though* the Three Persons *are said* (1 Joh. 5. 7,) *to be only One, and not explicitly One God, yet &c.* For though the English word, (*One,*) is indeed ambiguous, and may signify *One God, or One Person, or One Nature, or One Essence*; yet the Greek word, (*ἐν,*) is not so, and cannot possibly signify any of these things

things, unless by a remote and figurative construction.

However, in your Interpretation of this Text, you declare explicitly what *your Notion* of the Trinity is. And still more distinctly, *pag. 21 ; The Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity (you say) is truly This, that in the Godhead there are Three Persons of the same Divine INDIVIDUAL Essence.* Now This, I say, is an exprefs Contradiction in the very Terms. For *INDIVIDUAL Essence*, in all propriety of Speech, and if the word has any Signification at all, is (when spoken of an *Intelligent Being*) the very same as *PERSONAL Essence* ; that is to say, That by which a Person is that Individual Person which he is, and no Other. Besides, it is a Phrase not only not used in *Scripture*, nor in the *Three First Centuries*, nor in the *Fourth*, (unless it be the True Rendring of the word *μονούσιον* or *τριούσιον*, which was then universally condemned as *Heretical*;) but seems to be the Invention of the Schools, in latter Ages. Hear the very learned *Dr Cudworth* upon This Point. *It is evident, (saith he, pag. 604,) that these reputed Orthodox Fathers, [viz. St Cyril, St Gregory Nyssen, and others,] who were not a Few, were far from thinking the Three Hypostases of the Trinity to have the same*
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SINGULAR existent Essence:——That Trinity of Persons numerically the same, or having all one and the same *SINGULAR* existent Essence, is a Doctrine which seemeth Not to have been owned by Any publick Authority in the Christian Church, save that of the Lateran Council only: That no such thing was ever entertained by the Nicene Fathers, &c. Again: The Truth of This (saith he) will appear, first, because these Orthodox Anti-Arian Fathers did all of them zealously condemn Sabellianism; the doctrine whereof is no other than this, that there was but One Hypostasis, or Singular *INDIVIDUAL ESSENCE*, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: In the next place, because the word *Homoousios*, was never used by Greek Writers otherwise, than to signify the Agreement of things *NUMERICALLY DIFFERING* from one another, &c.——Lastly, that the Antient Orthodox Fathers, who used the word *Homoousios* against Arius, intended not therein to assert the Son to have One and the same Singular or *INDIVIDUAL* Essence with the Father, appeareth plainly from their disclaiming and disowning those Two words *Ταυτέσιον* and *Μο εΐσιον*. Again: It is plain (says he) that the Antient Orthodox Fathers asserted No such thing, as One and the same *SINGULAR* or Numerical Essence of the several Persons of the Trinity. And

pag. 605.

ibid.

pag. 611.

ibid.

This he proves by numerous most express Quotations. Where now is your vain Confidence in the *Concurrent Testimonies of the Fathers* ; when not only in the *Three First Centuries* your Notion, in the manner you express it, was never heard of, but even in the *Fourth* and following Centuries it was universally condemned ? But still I am willing to allow all This to be besides the main Question ; For *Scripture only is Our Rule*.

Well : But Dr Clarke (you say) *can't* pag. 32.
but know, that the most usual Pleas made by Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and other Sectaries, are no other than what He himself urges, viz. that Scripture is the only Rule of Truth in matters of Religion, and that Men are to take care not to confound and blend Human Testimonies with Scripture. Very True : Presbyterians and Other Sectaries receive the Holy Scripture as their Rule : What Then ? Must We therefore not receive it as our Rule ? Presbyterians and Other Sectaries pretend to follow Scripture only : Must We therefore not pretend to follow Scripture only ? Surely, Sir, the Question is not, who they are that pretend to make Scripture their Guide, but who they are that really make it so. And though Men of all opinions do indeed allege Scripture for their opinions, yet I think there is plainly This difference :

ference : In favour of *Some opinions* there can be alleged only some very Few, and those very Obscure and controverted Texts, and such as can be demonstrated not to prove what they are alleged for, by numerous plain and clear Texts evidently evincing the contrary : On the other side, in favour of *some Other opinions*, there can be alleged a very great Number of plain and clear Texts, even the whole Tenour and Design of Scripture ; against which on the contrary there can be opposed by an Adversary, only some Single obscure and very disputable Texts. The Inference I would draw from hence is, that every Opinion concerning a Point of Revealed Religion, ought to be look'd upon as having just so much more or less Certainty, and to be treated accordingly, in proportion as it is built either upon *More and Plainer*, or upon *Fewer and Obscurer* Texts. Well : But Who shall be *fudge*, whether an Opinion is built upon *Many and Clear*, or upon *Few and Obscure* Texts ? I answer : As *Wisdom* is justified of all her Children, so *Truth* also must finally be left to be justified by the *Reason of Mankind* ; And whosoever studies the Scripture with a sincere and unprejudiced Desire of finding the Truth, in order to *obey the Will of God* ; has the Promise of our Lord, that he *shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God*. But you are

of another Opinion, and think some *Other Judge* necessary : I heartily wish, it were an *Infallible One*. You think the Cause is referred to be *Decided by the Primitive Fathers* : But Men of *all opinions* allege *Fathers* also, as well as Scripture ; And so the Question returns, Who shall *interpret* to us *the Fathers* ? Your Answer at last must be, *The Church*. And then, (you know the Question has often been put in the Romish controversy,) *Who is the Church* ? *The Church of Rome* pretends to it ; *The Greek Church* pretends to it ; and *the Church in every other Nation upon Earth* pretends to it ; *The present Church* pretends to it ; and *the Church that was 500 Years since*, full of very different Opinions, pretended to it likewise : And *Who* shall judge, which of These is in the Right ? Of necessity it must end in *This* at last : Either the Church must be judged by the Scripture, and Men by studying the Scripture must find which Church it is safest for them to joyn with ; (Which Principle is the Foundation and Essence of Protestant Religion ;) Or else every Man must *blindly* follow the *Authority* of the first *Teachers* he happens upon ; Which Opinion of yours, is fairly putting an end to all Religion at once, and terminates at length in Mr *Hobbs's* doctrine, That the *strongest Arm* ought always to put an end to all *Differences of Opinion*, just as

Darkness puts an end to all *Differences of Colour*. Besides: If the *Church* must interpret the *Fathers interpretation* of Scripture; still the Question returns, *Who shall interpret That last interpretation* of the Church? For, you well know, All the *Confessions of Faith* that ever were published by Humane Authority, have occasioned more Contentions, and been more difficult to *explain*, than the *Scripture itself*. Which is not at all to be wondred at. For, as, in *Philosophical Questions*, the *Commentators and Interpreters* of *Aristotle*, intermixing insensibly their own opinions with His, are infinitely harder to be understood, than the Works of *Aristotle* himself; so all *Systems of Divinity*, containing in them both the Whole Doctrine of Scripture and moreover a mixture of humane Opinions, must of necessity be more liable to be disputed about, than the *Scripture itself*. (For which reason, in explaining the Doctrine of the *Trinity*; [and the same Method would be very useful in all other Points of Divinity; I have endeavour'd to set forth the whole Doctrine in the very words of the Scripture itself, by collecting and placing in one view All the Texts that relate to that Subject; that the Reader may distinguish, at first Sight, what is indisputably revealed to him by divine Authority, from what is only propos'd to him as humane opinion, which

may always be disputed about, and ought perpetually to be examined with Care.) What a *Wilderness* now are you got into? And where will you stop, when once you depart from Scripture the Only Rule of revealed Truth; and use any Humane Writings, not as *Assistances to help you to understand*, but as *authoritatively Decisive of*, the Meaning of Scripture? The plain Truth of the whole Matter, I think, is This: As all other Books are generally well enough understood, by reasonable Men who study them with That Design; so the plain and necessary Parts of Scripture, the Rules by which Men shall be judged at the last day, are easy to be understood even by mean capacities; and those which are really obscure, as it is not possible Men should in truth agree about them, so 'tis of no Use they should be forced to pretend it. And yet indeed even the Obscurer passages of Scripture, if Men could be wholly unprejudiced, would not perhaps be so liable to be misunderstood, as is commonly imagined. For consider what is the Reason, that when our Saviour says, *I am the Door, I am the Vine*, and the like; no Man, either learned or unlearned, ever misunderstood him: but when he says, *This is my Body*, (which in itself is no harder a Figure, than the other expressions;) about the Meaning of This, Learned Men are perpetually cutting each others

others Throats. In like manner ; What is the true Reason, that when *St Paul* saith concerning *Himself* and *Apollus*, *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are One*, 1 Cor. 3, 8 ; no Man, either learned or unlearned, ever misunderstood him : but when our Saviour saith, *I and my Father* *are One*, (which are the Very Same Words ;)
Joh. 10, he must needs be understood to mean some-
30. thing utterly unintelligible ? And that, when he prays to his Father in behalf of his Disciples in these words ; *that They may be One, even as We are One ; I in Them,*
Joh. 17 ;
22 & 23. *and Thou in Me ;* the former part of *Each* of these Expressions is understood by every Man, but the meaning of the *latter* part of *each* of them must be quarrelled about for ever ?

You affirm (*pag. 36,*) that I *reject the Sound Judgment of my own Mother-Church* ; and (*pag. 37,*) that I *stand Condemned by the Judgment of the Whole Church of England*. Now though This Accusation is nothing to the Merits of any Question concerning *Truth* and *Errour*, yet, to obviate the Calumnies of Men who are more concerned about *Other Arguments* than those of *Truth*, I demonstrated, in my Book, by an Induction of Particulars, that there are *More* passages in the Liturgy of the Church of England, from which (taking Them as Premises)

Premises) my Conclusion will by just Reasoning necessarily be inferred, than there are Passages which seem on the contrary to contradict me. And from hence it follows, that till *You* can reconcile *All* those passages I cited, (as you have not attempted to reconcile *Any* of them,) to *Your* Notion; I have juster reason to affirm, that *You* stand condemned by the Judgment of the Church of England, than *You* have to affirm that *I* do so. But the *Argument* by which you prove, that I stand condemned by the Judgment of the Church of England; is a very pleasant and round One. By rejecting (you say) the *Catholick Doctrine of the Primitive Church*, I reject the *Sound Judgment* of my own *Mother-Church*. For the making good of which Argument; first, you suppose that my Notion is universally condemned by the Writers of the Three First Centuries: But of This, not one Syllable of Proof; because the Contrary is True. Well; but supposing my Notion not to agree with the Doctrine of Those Primitive Fathers, how does it Thence follow that I am condemned by the Church of England? Why, because our Prudent as well as Pious Mother would have All her Children—to look on the Testimonies of the Antient Writers, those of the Three first Ages, so you expressly explain yourself, pag. 21 and throughout,]—as the Best Means to be Rationally

pag. 36.

pag. 34.

pag. 35.

Article
6th.Article
20th.

Rationally perswaded, what may or may not be Truly concluded and proved by Scripture (It seems, without the Fathers, the Scripture is of no Use at all to conclude or prove any thing.) But how do you prove This to be the Judgment of the Church of England? Why, This is evident (you say) from the PRACTISE of our Church; INASMUCH AS, in the Preface to the Form of Ordination and Consecration, our Church has observed, as an unanswerable Proof in itself of the Threefold Order of the Ministry that "it is evident unto all Men diligently reading, if not the Holy Scripture alone, yet it and Antient Authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons". In like manner by inserting into her most excellent Liturgy the Nicene OR Constantinopolitan Creed, and That commonly called the Creed of St Athanasius, &c. That is to say: Notwithstanding the Church has declared in the most Solemn and Authentick manner, that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation. And that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's

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word written; neither may it so expound
 one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant
 to another; Wherefore although the Church
 be a Witness and a **KEEPER** of Holy
 Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing
AGAINST the same, so **BESIDES**
 the same ought it not to enforce any thing
 to be believed for necessity of Salvation: And
 that even General Councils, forasmuch as *Article*
 they be an Assembly of Men whereof All be ^{21st}.
 not governed with the Spirit and Word of
 God, may err, and sometime have erred, even
 in things pertaining unto God; Wherefore
 things ordained by them as necessary to Sal-
 vation, have neither Strength nor Authority,
 unless it may be declared that they be taken
 out of Holy Scripture: Notwithstanding all
 these solemn and most Authentick Decla-
 rations; yet, because it Once accidentally
 mentions *Antient Writers*, by way of con-
 firmation of a matter of Fact; and inserts
 into the Liturgy One Creed made in the
 fourth Century, and Another made No body
 knows how many Centuries after That; (not
 out of any Regard to the Authority of the
 Compilers; but merely for This Reason,
 that the Reformers judged they could re-
 main them agreeably with Scripture, as is
 expressly declared in the 8.^b Article com-
 pared with the 21st;) hence you conclude,
 that the Church of England would have all *pag. 34.*
 her Children believe, that the Best Means

to be Rationally perswaded what May or may not be Truly concluded and proved by Scripture, is, not to rely on the Scripture itself, by studying it and comparing one place with another, but to depend on the Testimonies of the Antient Writers ; and that, unless a Man thus makes the Fathers to be his Rule of trying the Sense of Scripture, (that is, unless, diametrically opposite to the whole Protestant doctrine he professes to regard the Scripture so far only as it agrees with the Antient Fathers instead of regarding the Antient Fathers so far only as they agree with Scripture,) stands condemned by the Judgment of the Church of England. Is this the Arguing, of a Man accustomed to Mathematical Studies. But besides: The Antient Writers, with you are the Writers of the Three first Centuries. And how does the Church of England, by inserting One Creed made in the Fourth Century, and Another made at least Three or Four Centuries after That, refer matters of Faith to be decided by the Testimony of the Writers in the Three first Centuries? I am much afraid, if we must be referred away from the Scripture at all, and if there be any Force in your Argument, we shall soon be referred to the Writers of the 8th and 9th Centuries, as well as of the Three first. And then the Protestant Cause is in a Hopeful Condition.

You despise my manner of expressing myself, when I say, *The greatest part of the Writers Before and At the time of the Council of Nice, were, I THINK, Really of That Opinion &c.* But do you imagine, Sir, I thought myself the less Certain of what I affirmed, because I did not express it in *Confident Words*? Does *Confidence* ever add *Strength* to any Cause, or give *Weight and Solidity* to any Argument? I said, I *Thought* the greatest part of those Writers were on my side; and I gave my *Reasons why* I thought so, in the numerous Citations which I alleged of their own express words. You, on the contrary, are very *confident*, that they are All clearly and unanimously against me; but you do not so much as *attempt* to bring any the least *Proof* of what you are so sure of. And do you think that in *This* you have gained any Advantage over me? But concerning the Opinions of the *Fathers*, I have spoken more fully above.

Your whole Argument, *pag. 49, 50, 51, 52*; also *pag. 21*, and indeed in most other parts of your Book; is what may, almost word for word, be retorted upon you in its full strength, by Those of the Church of Rome, in favour of *Any Tradition*. The *Scripture* (it seems) is, in many things, *pag. 9 & obscure; 29.*

- obscure* : The Cause must be left to be De-
 pag. 21. *cided by the Testimony of the Primitive*
Church: Those of the First Age, knew IN-
 FALLIBLY the True Sense of Scripture,
 pag. 21. and CONSEQUENTLY delivered the
 Same Truly to their Followers : Those of
 the Third Age, knew from those of the
 pag. 21. First and Second, the True Sense of Scrip-
 ture CERTAINLY ; and, to be sure,
 made due Use of it, in conveying it Truly
 pag. 22. to the next Age ; and so On : The Gover-
 nours of the Church, to prevent Errors, must
 pag. 49. insert into the Creed more particular Explan-
 ations of some Articles : This, is not In-
 pag. 50. larging the Creed, but only Expressing the
 Article in More Words ; the Sense of the
 enlarged Creed being No other, than that of
 pag. 51. the original Baptismal Creed : Controverted
 Articles were Always explained according to
 That Sense, which was derived from the
 Beginning : The Providence of God would
 not permit, that Those who had the Power
 pag. 51. should ever not be in the Right : Gover-
 nours therefore never were uncharitable in
 such Censures or Proceedings, as were the
 most proper Method to reclaim Heterodox per-
 sons : And thus the True Sense of Scripture
 pag. 52. has been preserved and maintained by Tra-
 dition, and received by the Catholick Church
 through the several subsequent Ages thereon
 without Any corruption, even unto This
 day

day. Thus argues a *Roman-Catholick* : And if *You* argue *rightly*, so also does *He* : For One *Egg* is not more like Another, than *His* Argument is like to *Yours*. And in Neither of them indeed is there any Other Fault, but This only, that (God knows) the direct Contrary is in Ecclesiastical History too apparently True. The further you go from the *Fountain*, the less pure is the *Stream* ; and there is no depending upon any thing but *Scripture*.

Your Observation, (*pag. 50.*) that though every Age grew more Minute, yet it was by no means in determining *UNNECESSARY* Controversies, unless Dr Clarke will have the determining of the True Sense of Articles which he allows to be *NECESSARY* to be understood, to be the determining of *UNNECESSARY* Controversies : is a mean Playing with words, unbecoming your own Gravity and the Dignity of the Subject. For can any thing be more obvious, than that an *Article* may itself be *Necessary* to be understood, and yet at the same time many *Unnecessary* Controversies may be raised about Circumstances relating to *That Article* ? Are not the *Resurrection of the Body*, and the *Life everlasting*, Two Articles very necessary to be understood by every Christian ? and yet is it not at the same time

time a very *unnecessary* Controversy, to dispute whether *every individual particle of the same Body that died shall be raised again*, or not ; and whether, in the *Life everlasting*, the Blessed shall be capable of *still further Degrees of improvement*, or not ? With numberless other the like Questions. Thus likewise, *the Incarnation of the Son of God*, is an Article very *necessary* to be understood by Christians ; and yet to inquire in *what particular metaphysical manner That Son was begotten of his Father*, may be, and is, a very *unnecessary* Controversy.

What follows, (*pag. 53,*) is still much worse ; *LATITUDINARIAN*, *alias COMPREHENSION*, *alias MODERATION-Principles*. What *Science These Terms of Art* belong to ; and how *well This Language* becomes the Mouth of a *Serious Divine* ; and what *Proof* these fine Expressions amount to, of any part of the Question between us ; I shall wholly leave to *Others* to judge.

Only one thing I must observe to you by the by. It is a very *usual*, but very *unrighteous* custom among Writers of Controversy, when they can't answer *Arguments in particular*, to throw *General Names of Reproach*, of No certain determinate Signification. Thus *Mr Chillingworth*, and
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Arch-Bishop Tillotson, and some others of the *Ablest* and the *Best* Men, that the *Protestant* and the *Christian* Cause was ever defended by; when they could not be answered, were called *Latitudinarians*; only to raise an Odium against them among the ignorant people, who cannot easily distinguish between *hard Words* and *hard Arguments*, and are too apt to be prejudiced with *hard Words* whose *Meaning* they understand not. I am very sure, that These *Latitudinarians*, whom both *you* and *I* have upon this occasion mentioned by *Name*, are Men that sincerely indeavoured to follow the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles; And though *you* Now seem ashamed to be joined with such Company, yet God grant *I* may be found with them at the Great Day. pag. 38.

What you add in the same Paragraph, as an *Instance* of *Latitudinarian* Principles, [*viz.* that *Whosoever* does but profess He believes the *Original Baptismal Creed* according to the bare Words thereof, no matter in what Sense, He ought to be look'd upon, without any more ado, as a *True Good Christian* in respect of his Faith;] though it be very unfairly express'd, and with an ill Spirit, yet seems indeed to contain the most material Difficulty in your whole Book, viz. *How* pag. 53.

How Men shall know, (since Words are nothing without a determinate Sense,) what is the determinate Sense of those Fundamental Articles of Faith, which are absolutely necessary to Salvation? I answer: They are expressed as Clearly in the *Sermons* of Christ and in the Writings of his Apostles, as the Spirit of God thought fit they should be expressed; and the *Wisdom of Man* cannot express them more clearly. Whoever reads the *Sermons* of Christ and the Writings of his Apostles, with a sincere intent to learn from thence what he must do to be saved, may be as Certain of understanding the determinate Sense of the Words wherein They express the Necessary Requisites to Salvation, as he can be of understanding the determinate Sense of the Words of Fallible Men; and More certain, of not being led thereby into Error. These Fundamentals, the Church has from the Beginning in-deavoured briefly to express in the *Baptismal Creed*, not as an *Authoritative Explication*, but as an *Instructive Summary*. And the Articles of This Creed, (especially as it was worded in the Three First Centuries, which is the Time you appeal to,) are so clear and intelligible, that, I verily believe, no sincere mind ever misunderstood any one of them. All the Controversies in the Christian World, have been either about Other Parts

of Scripture, which contain infallibly true Doctrine, but not *Fundamentally necessary* to the Salvation of a Christian; or else, (and indeed more frequently,) about the Authority and the determinate Sense of the additional Explications of Men; Which may indeed well be look'd upon as Questions and Speculations about Truth and Error, but not about That Faith by which a Man must be Saved or Damned.

I had said, (*Introduct. pag. 19.*) that it was a great Fault in young Students, to take up their Notions in Divinity first from Humane and Modern Forms of speaking, and then to pick out afterwards (as Proofs) some FEW single Texts of Scripture, instead of attending to the whole Scope and general Tenour of Scripture in the First place. To This, you reply: I must crave leave to dissent herein from the Doctor: For surely the Whole is made up of its Parts, and not the Parts of the Whole: And consequently the Whole Scope and General Tenour of the Scripture is to be known, by knowing the Right Sense of THE SEVERAL PARTICULAR Texts; and it is Absurd to say on the contrary, that particular Texts are to be Rightly understood by the Whole Scope and General Tenour of Scripture; this being in effect to say, that the Parts are

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pag. 57.

made up of the *Whole* : Wherefore, since in the order of Nature I am First rightly to understand *THE PARTICULAR* Texts of Scripture, before I can understand rightly what is the *Whole* Scope and General Tenour of Scripture ; and consequently 'tis impossible in the nature of the Thing, for me to understand the Former by understanding the Latter ; hence there is a necessity of assigning Some Other way, as the Best for rightly understanding *THE PARTICULAR* Texts or Passages of Scripture, and thereby the General Tenour of Scripture : And That Best way, is having Recourse to the Antient Writers, &c. Now is This a way of arguing, at all becoming a serious Writer, pleading in earnest for what he believes to be the Truth ? I made the Distinction between particular Texts taken singly, a *FEW* single Texts, (those were my Words,) on the one hand ; and, on the other hand, the *Whole* Tenour of Scripture, that is, *ALL* the Numerous particular Texts relating to any one Doctrine, considered and compared Together. Instead of This, you, in your Reply, represent me as opposing *All* the particular Texts of Scripture, to the *Whole* Tenour of Scripture ; that is, as opposing the *Whole* Scripture to the *Whole* Scripture. And can you really, Sir, have so mean an Opinion of your Readers, as to think that

need make Any Answer to such kind of Arguments as These ?

But there is still *Another* admirable piece of Sagacity, in this Paragraph of yours. The *Whole Scope and General Tenour of Scripture*, we must know, cannot be rightly understood otherwise, than by understanding *The Particular Texts* ; because the *Whole* must needs be made up of its *Parts* : And *The Particular Texts* cannot be understood by *attending impartially to the whole Scope and general Tenour of Scripture*, (that is, by considering and comparing all those Texts one with another ;) because *This*, it seems, *is in effect to say, that the Parts are* pag. 58. *made up of the Whole* : THEREFORE there's No way at all to understand the Scripture, but by some *Other Help*, viz. by the *Antient Fathers*. Is This again the Argument of a *Mathematical Writer* ? One of the greatest Benefits of such Studies, and that which uses to distinguish Men who are skilled in That Learning, from Those who are not ; is their taking Care that their Conclusion be sure to follow from their Premises : But This, *you* almost constantly neglect. Apply such Arguing to any other Book in the World ; and try if you can perswade Mankind, that *Tully's Offices*, or any other Book of Morality, is not to be understood by reading

and studying the Book itself, but that the Doctrine taught in *That* Book can be learnt only by studying *Other* Books.

pag. 59.

Your next Argument, is Something about the Acquaintance and Intimacy certain Men may have happened to have formerly contracted, as being of the Same University and Fellow-Collegiates, and more particularly yet, Chamber-Fellows, and the like. I suppose you will be surprized, when I tell you, that the Persons you speak of, not only never were Chamber-Fellows, but even not so much as of the Same College. But if the Fact had been True; was it either in itself of any Importance, or any thing at all to your purpose? Consider, Sir, seriously in your own Mind, whether this Childish Wrath of Man, can in any degree work the Righteousness of God, or be likely in any measure to promote Truth and Equity and Charity amongst Men. Is any Man the worse or the better Christian, or are his Arguments the weaker or the stronger, for having lived in the Neighbourhood of such and such particular persons, or having been in the same House or in the same Chamber with them? You were told this matter for a Truth, no doubt: But does it become a Man of Dr Wells's character, when he declares he is Not in the least ashamed to own
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pag. 66.

Publickly his Name, and that he has not only taken Care Himself to let nothing drop from his Pen but what was consistent with the True Spirit of Meekness and Christianity, but has also Submitted these his Papers to the Judgment of Judicious, truly Pious, and Eminent Persons in London, with full Power to strike out whatever shall appear to their Better Judgments Not consistent with the True Spirit of Meekness and Christianity: Does it become Dr Wells, with such a Preamble as This, to endeavour meanly to raise an Odium amongst ignorant people against a Person who never offended him; by publishing, with the Authority of his Name to it, a Little False Story? and This, without giving himself the Trouble so much as once to inquire, whether there was any Truth in it or no; though he had Neighbours that were of That University and of That College he speaks of, who could with the greatest Ease have informed him better? We pretend justly to abhor the Principles of Those Men, who think no Faith is to be kept with their Adversaries? And shall Protestants themselves, when they happen to differ in Opinion, take No care to keep any measures of Truth and Charity? Because You think yourself Orthodox, (as I also, and I hope with as good Reason, think My self;) are you therefore

fore at liberty to raise little Calumnies at a venture, and endeavour to blind people with *Prejudice*, instead of convincing them by *Reason*? If, in matters of Controversy, Both sides should make a Custom of allowing themselves in such Negligence; what a hopeful Example should we set to our
 Tit. 3, 2. people of the Doctrine we preach, *to speak evil of no Man*? But because I believe This was only *Negligence* in you, and not *Design*; I hope the Convictions of your own Conscience will make you to be more cautious for the future, and to consider of how Ill Example *Such sort of Negligence* is.

But to proceed: In your next Observation, (upon my cautioning Men to be guided, not by the *Sound* of single Texts, but by the *Sense* and *whole Tenour* of Scripture,) you are again playing with Words, in a manner which does not greatly become
 pag. 59. so serious a Subject. *Because St Paul, (you say,) speaking of Christ, affirms of him, (Rom. 9, 5,) that He is OVER ALL, GOD blessed for ever, We are not therefore (for avoiding being misguided by the Sound of this single Text,) to understand the True Sense of the said Text to be This, viz. that Christ is NOT OVER ALL, GOD blessed for ever.* As if (besides your unfairness in concealing from your Reader
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the *Ambiguity of the words* of that Text in the Original,) every Child could not understand, that He who, with respect to the *whole Creation made subject to him, is GOD OVER ALL*; yet at the same time, with respect to Him who *subjected all things to him, is NOT GOD OVER ALL*: It being *Manifest*, (as St Paul observes,) that is to say, *manifest to the common Sense* ^{1 Cor. 15,} of Mankind, without needing to be often ^{27.} repeated; that *He who subjected all things* ^{1 Cor. 15,} to the Dominion of Christ, (namely, *GOD*, ^{24.} even *THE FATHER*, as the same Apostle takes Care to explain himself,) must needs be exempted from being Himself subject to That Dominion.

The like Trifling, follows again in the ^{pag. 59.} next words: *Because* (you say) *St John affirms* (1 Joh. 5, 7,) *that These Three ARE ONE, We are not therefore* (for avoiding being misguided by the Sound of this single Text) *to understand the True Sense of the Text to be This, These Three ARE NOT ONE*. As if things that in one Sense may be truly said *to be One*, might not as truly in another Sense be said *not to be One*. Besides, that you exceedingly abuse your English Reader, when you entirely conceal from him, both that the word, *One*, has not in the Original That Ambiguity,

guity, which it has in English ; and also that the *Whole Text itself*, (for ought that yet appears,) has been wanting in *Every* manuscript Copy of the Original, that is or ever Was in the World. Of which matter, more has been spoken above.

And still once again, in the following
 pag. 59. words : *And so, verse 20th of the same Chapter, because it is said, This (that is, [you say,] Jesus Christ,) IS THE TRUE GOD, We are not therefore (for fear of being misguided by the Sound of the said Text) to understand its True Meaning to be This, viz. This IS NOT THE TRUE GOD.* As if it were not very plainly consistent, to affirm of Christ, with regard to Dominion over *Us* and the *whole Creation*, that *He is Truly God* ; and yet that at the same time, with regard to the *Supreme Father of All*, Christ is not He (or That Person) who in Scripture is stiled by way of Eminence [*ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός*] *The True God* and *The Only True God*. But Here also again you use your English Reader very unfairly, when you Thus cite the Text, *This (that is, Jesus Christ) is the True God* ; as if That were, without any Ambiguity, the Signification of the words in the Original : Which is by no means the Case. For though the thing it
 self,

self, understood in a right Sense, and ac-
 cording to the Analogy of Scripture, is un-
 doubtedly true, that *Jesus Christ is Truly*
God ; yet That is *not* the Assertion of this
 Text. *We know* (says the Apostle) *that*
the Son of God is come ; and hath given us
 an Understanding, *that we may know Him*
that is True, [*τὸν ἀληθινὸν θεόν*, *the True God* ;
 so the most and best MSS have it ; in
 like manner as *Joh. 17, 3* ;] *And we Are*
in Him that is True, [*in the True God* ;
 So the Construction manifestly requires it
 to be understood, of the same Person as be-
 fore ; *ἵνα γνώσκωμεν ΤΟΝ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΝ (θεόν)*
καὶ ἵσωμεν ἐν Τῷ ΑΛΗΘΙΝῳ ; and *we are in*
That true God,] *In* (that is, *By*) *his Son*
Jesus Christ : *This is the True God, and*
eternal Life ; Little Children, *keep yourselves*
from Idols. The Meaning plainly is: This
 is the True God, whom the Son of God
 has given us an Understanding to know,
 and in whom we Are by His means :
 That is to say, This is the True Religi-
 on, and the Way to eternal Life, (*viz.*
 the Worship of this True God by and
 through his Son Jesus Christ ;) Beware
 of Idol-worship. Thus, *verse 11th* of this
 Chapter: *This is the Record, that God hath*
given to us eternal Life, and This Life is
in [that is, *By or Through*] *his Son*.

pag. 60.

Your next citation, of the Two Texts out of *S^t Peter* and *Isaiak*, concerning Christ's suffering *for our Sins* or *not for our Sins*; is either *not at all pertinent* which is the Best that can be supposed of it; or else it is intended to suggest most *unrighteous* insinuation, as if I had said any thing in diminution of Christ's suffering *for our Sins*; for which suggestion, I have no where given you so much as the least Colour. But as he that breaks the *Law* in *One* point, is guilty of *All* so (it seems) whosoever differs from your *Opinion* in any *one* case, may lawfully be charged by you with any *other* Error whatsoever. Will it not better become

Prov. 26,
18.

All to consider; *As a Mad-man, who catcheth Fire-brands, Arrows and Death*; so *saith the Man that Revileth his Neighbour, Am not I in Sport?*

pag. 60.

To your Observations upon my *Answer to the Forms by Law appointed*, my Answer is; that by having plainly declared my *Opinion*, *as soon as it was possible* for me to collect the materials necessary to determine it, without regarding (as you unjustly suggest) at what *Time* it might *prudentially* be done; I have, with all decent Modesty, submitted. That whole

ter to the Judgment of my *Superiours*,
and taken care not to impose upon my
Inferiours or *Equals*. Whether Assenting
to Any words of humane Institution, in
the Manner which *Your* whole Argument
aims at, merely in reliance upon the ge-
neral Authority of *Tradition*, without con-
sidering in *particular* how and in what
sense 'tis possible the words assented to
may be understood consistently both with
the Scripture and with Themselves compa-
red together; Whether, I say, This way
of Assenting, how much soever it may
possibly tend to a sort of *Peace*, can in any
wise tend to the promoting of *True Religi-
on*, I shall not here take upon me to de-
termine.

As to the *Difficulty* you are afraid there pag. 62.
may be in *Dispossessing* me of my *Prefer-
ment*; How This tends to show the Reader
any *Weakness* in *MY Argument*, I under-
stand not: But I am very sorry to see,
(for *your* sake, much more than for my
own,) that a Man of your Abilities should
Thus declare, wherein (he thinks) consists
the chief *Strength* of *HIS*. In This mat-
ter, Sir, *you know not what Spirit you are*
of. God be thanked, the Protestant Reli-
gion has not yet renounced the *Essential*
Principle upon which it is built. For,

were any whole Church, of That Spirit which the Consequences of your *present* Arguing lead to, (I hope it is not your *settled* and *calm* Opinion;) I assure you, it would be *no Difficulty at all*, to prevent Me from being a Member of such a Church.

I shall conclude the Whole, with setting before you, as in a Glass, a lively and exact Picture of the *different Spirits* of Men, in the Words of a Person as heartily Zealous for the Authority and Traditions of the Church, as any Learned *PROTESTANT* in Christendom. It is the ingenious *Robert Nelson* Esq; in his Life of the Right Reverend Bishop *Bull*; speaking concerning the Bishops Explication of the Doctrine of *Justification*, which is *Now* as universally received and followed, as it was *Then* contrary to the general Opinion of Divines.

Now (says Mr Nelson,) as the Method of our Author [Bishop Bull] was always to seek Truth at the Fountain-head; Whatever Respect he might have for our First Reformers, and some other great Divines both Foreigners and Natives, he could by no means take up with their AUTHORITY, though never so pompously set off; but was for going directly to the very Originals themselves.—Accordingly he betakes himself, in the very first place, to the Holy Scriptures; and here he prudently beginneth with that which is obvious and plain, rather than with that which is ambiguous and obscure. Mr Nelson's Life of Bp Bull, pag. 104.

Notwithstanding all which caution of his in the treating of this Point, that had been rendered so abstruse, more by the laborious disputations of Divines, than by the Nature of the Thing itself, or of the Revelation concerning it; there was presently no small Alarm, both in the Church and out of it, from Mr Bull's performance; as if the Church of England, and the whole Protestant Religion, were by it in danger. For, his departing herein from the private Opinions of some Doctors of our Church, tho' in Obedience to her Rule, was by several interpreted for no less than a departing

ing from the Faith by her delivered. pag. 97.

There arose in the Church no small contention, whether this Interpretation of Scripture were conformable to the Articles of Religion, and the Homily of Justification therein referred to. Some maintained—that it was; some doubted about it; and others downright denied it, and condemned it as Heretical. There was many a harsh Censure passed upon the Book and the Author, for some time; Which is not to be wondred at. pag. 98.

Some mightily triumphed over him for—not attending enough to the Doctrine of his own Church. pag. 225.

Others, as if he were not only to be blamed for an Heretick by the Church, but even for an Heresiarch too. pag. 211.

That Mr. Bull's explication of the Doctrine of Justification, was properly Heretical; as being contrary, in a fundamental point, to the Testimony of Scripture, and against the Opinion of the Catholick Fathers, the judgment of the Church of England, and the determinations of all the foreign Reformed Churches. pag. 214.

Some stirred up several of the Bishops—to make Use of their Apostolical Authority in thundering out their Anathema's against the Doctrines here maintained, as pernicious

and heretical, and contrary to the Decrees of the Church of England, and of all other Reformed Churches. These were quickly seconded in This by some Others, partly known, and partly unknown; of whom Some that understood but little of the matter, were, as it often happens, the hottest of all against him, and were for pushing things to the utmost extremity: But moderate Counsels prevailed for the most part; and the Governours of the Church were so wise, as not to intermeddle further in this affair, than to keep the Peace of the Church committed to them. pag. 101.

Some there were, more violent than the rest; of whom He complaineth, that they made very Tragical Outcries against him, as if by such an Hypothesis as This, "the whole System of Orthodox Divinity should be shaken, yea broken to pieces and utterly destroyed; and that the very Foundations both of Law and Gospel were hereby at once undermined and overturned. pag. 166.

Some there were more wise and learned than the rest, who yet approved it not, that they might not appear guilty of Innovating, as they called it. And it could not be digested by them,——because the Prejudices which a great many worthy persons among us had sucked in from the narrow Systems of

of modern Divinity or otherwise,——were too strong for them entirely to overcome even with the Help of the clearest Light pag. 98.

Some were among the most zealous to oppose,——by their rigid adherence to certain Tenets by them formerly imbibed, and to some Scholastick Terms unsupported either by Scripture or Antiquity. pag. 102.

There could have been no difficulty concerning——; had either the state of the controversy in the Apostles days been attended to as it ought, or persons had not come with their modern Opinions and Prejudices to read the Apostolical Epistles; not so much, very often, to learn what is the Truth, as to establish themselves thereby in what they are already, by the Tradition of a Sect, prepossessed with to be the Truth. pag. 123.

Some, not allowing themselves time to think sedately, or even to examine sufficiently the sense of an Author who pleased them not; being fired with a Zeal for what they took for Truth, from the Systems which they had greedily sucked in as Authentick Explications of the Gospel; entirely lost themselves thereby, and exposed the very cause they undertook to defend. pag. 146.

They set themselves to defend their own Scheme, as the only Orthodox one; thinking that Mr Bull would make an intolerable Change in the very Substance of the Body of Divinity. pag. 172.

But He [viz. Mr Bull] affirms it to be most unreasonable and against the Principles of the Church of England, to prefer the Authority of any modern Doctor or Doctors whatsoever, before a Truth grounded upon Scripture, with the unanimous consent of the Catholick Church. pag. 235.

Yet with much ingenuity He confesses that——“ matters were come to that pass,
 “ that it was hardly safe for any One
 “ to interpret either the Articles of our
 “ Church, or even the Holy Scriptures
 “ themselves, otherwise than according to
 “ the Standard of Calvins Institutions;
 “ Whose Errour therefore, (saith he,) ought
 “ not so much to be imputed to Them,
 “ as to the Age wherein they lived: Since
 “ almost in every Age, as One has well
 “ observed, there is as it were a certain
 “ Torrent of opinions proper to it, against
 “ which whosoever shall go to oppose him-
 “ self, he shall certainly either be carried
 “ away with the Violence thereof, or be
 “ quite overwhelmed”. This is an Ob-
 servation that is very just:——Nay, did
 L I know

I know a better Excuse for——good and learned Men who were educated in such Times and according to such Principles, and so were carried on by the Zeal of what was called Orthodox; I would be as willing to do them right, &c. pag. 233.

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